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politics alternately of the subtlest and of the most expansive school; the action and reaction upon each other of the mature political strength of the English Cabinet, and the adolescent energy of America. It is filled with characters, with incidents; the senate house rings with an eloquence, like that which was wont to be heard in the storms of the old commonwealths; strains of exhortation and resolute responses echo to each other across the Atlantic; in the shifting scenes of the war, all the races of man and the stages of civilization are mingled, the British veteran, the German mercenary, the gallant Chevaliers of Poland and France, the hardy American yeoman, the mountaineer, the painted savage. At one moment the mighty fleets of Europe are thundering in the Antilles; at the next, the blue eyed Brunswickers, the veterans of the Seven Years' War, are seen winding down from the Canadian frontier, under the command of an English Gentleman, to capitulate to the American militia; peace is made; thirteen republics stand side by side on the Continent, bleeding from the wounds of war, tremblingly alive for the independence, which their labors and agonies had gained them; the trial of war has been borne, that of peace succeeds; a Constitution is proposed, is discussed, is adopted; a new life is breathed by it into the exhausted channels of the nation, which starts from that moment in a career of prosperity so rapid, so resistless, so adventurous, that the reality every day puts our brightest visions to shame. And this astonishing drama of events was the work of our days; its theatre was our beloved country; its immortal actors were our fathers.

ART. VII.—*The Rebels, or Boston before the Revolution.* By THE AUTHOR OF HOBOMOK. Boston. Cummings, Hilliard, and Co. 12mo. pp. 304.

WE are glad to see that the author of *Hobomok*, whom we understand to be a lady, has resumed her pen. That interesting little tale made its way to the public favor solely by its own merits, and was scarcely noticed by our critics, till their opinions had been rendered of little consequence by the decision of the literary community. Whatever objections may be made to the mode in which the story is conducted, and the catastrophe pro-

duced, it cannot be denied, that these faults are abundantly redeemed by beauties of no ordinary value. In graphic descriptions of scenery, in forcible delineations of character, in genuine pathos, we think *Hobomok* may be safely compared with any work of fiction, which our country has produced. It was natural, therefore, that the expectations of the public should be highly excited, by the appearance of another work from the same hand; and, in fact, a new novel has rarely been seized upon with greater avidity.

The author has paid the usual price of an early reputation, that of being compelled to use redoubled exertions in order to prevent it from fading. We cannot venture to say, that her laurels have lost none of their freshness by the present attempt, but on the other hand, we think that her failure is only a partial one, and that it may be ascribed to other causes than want of ability. In the first place, the choice of the subject is singularly unfortunate. The era of *Hobomok* was fixed in so remote a period, that the author was entirely exempted from any necessity of adhering to historical truth in her narration of events. Her incidents are almost entirely the offspring of her own fancy, and her personages may every one of them be considered as fictitious; for though we find in history the names of Governor Endicott, of Lady Arabella, of Corbitant, and *Hobomok*, yet so little is generally known of their respective characters, that the author could invest every one of them with such qualities as she might deem expedient, without doing violence, for a single moment, to the recollections of her readers.

But the scene of the work before us is fixed, as its title indicates, in Boston, a few years previous to the American Revolution, and the author has incorporated into her story many public events of that recent and interesting period, and introduced among her *dramatis personæ* such well known public characters, as Samuel Adams, James Otis, Governor Hutchinson, and Mather Byles. It is manifest, therefore, that instead of choosing a period and a scene, which would have given full play to her powerful fancy, she has voluntarily shackled it with no light impediments, and undertaken a task, beneath which even the genius of the Unknown might have faltered without disgrace.

In fact, this work is in a great degree a mere copy from real history, a narrative of events possessing an interest which fiction can do little to heighten, a repetition of political sentiments, which we find expressed with far more force and eloquence in the

writings of Adams and of Quincy, and which are as familiar to the mind of every New England reader, as the simplest elements of morality. These defects were almost forced upon our author by her injudicious choice of a subject. There are others, however, which cannot be fairly ascribed to the same cause.

The narrative is greatly deficient in simplicity and unity, and is not so much one story as a number of separate stories, not interwoven, but loosely tied together. Every prominent character is introduced with a long genealogy, and we feel something of the same embarrassment, in tracing their several histories, and preventing them from mingling with each other in our recollections, which a lawyer experiences in hunting down a title, through a number of long and intricate conveyances. The author, in short, seems to have been perplexed by the richness of her inventive powers, and has crowded into a short volume, a sufficient quantity of incidents to form the groundwork of half a dozen respectable novels. We think it the more necessary to comment on this fault, because no point has been so much neglected, by the writers of historical romances, from the author of *Waverley* downwards, as the management of their narrative; and we have even seen it maintained by critics as an axiom, that the story of a novel is of as little consequence, as the frame of a picture, or the thread of a pearl necklace. It would be easy to oppose simile to simile, and to speak of the difference between a regular and magnificent structure, and a confused pile of splendid materials, but we prefer submitting the question without argument to the taste of the public.

This profusion of incidents and want of method are, however, neither the only nor the greatest faults in the narrative of the *Rebels*. Almost every reader, we believe, will be dissatisfied with the manner in which the author has thought proper to wind up the history of *Lucretia*. This character is perhaps better drawn than any other in the whole work. It has ever been considered, as one of the most difficult problems in novel writing, to render a heroine interesting without beauty; and the success with which this is done, in the present instance, is of itself a sufficient proof of no ordinary talents. From the first moment of her appearance, to her rejection of *Somerville* at the altar, *Lucretia* maintains a powerful hold on our feelings. Had her story then closed, or had she then been consigned, like her friend *Grace*, to an early grave, or to a hopeless celibacy, we believe that every reader would have been amply gratified;

but to see her, after all, comfortably married, excites much the same benevolent disappointment in all lovers of true sentiment, as is manifested in many of our public prints, when a long expected duel is prevented by an amicable arrangement, in which case, as we have heard it aptly said, ‘the *generous public* will be satisfied with nothing but bloodshed.’ To speak rather more seriously, the marriage between the high spirited Lucretia and a lover whom she had once rejected, bespeaks more of the prudent calculation of real life, than of the romantic dignity, which we are accustomed to exact from the heroes and heroines of the world of fiction.

A still more serious objection may be made to the incident, which takes place in the tomb of the Osbornes. The introduction of such a circumstance reminds us of some of the worst passages of Crabbe; and it is surely better to leave our feelings untouched, than to attempt to move them by such revolting and shocking objects.

We have now pointed out the principal faults of the author with a freedom, which we have thought it our duty to use. Had she produced merely a dull and insipid work, we should have left it to sink quietly into oblivion, without attempting to arrest or to accelerate its progress. But as we have before intimated, her faults are evidently those, not of a feeble, but a misguided intellect; and this work is, after all, a production of great merit. In the first place, the style is pure and elegant, and equally free from affectation and carelessness. Besides, whatever objections may be made to the work, as a regular and harmonious whole, no one can deny that it abounds in passages, which, taken by themselves, are strikingly beautiful and interesting. The description of the mob, which destroyed Governor Hutchinson’s library, is drawn with the hand of a master. The sermon of Whitefield is executed with great felicity, and is in exact keeping with the character of that eloquent and untutored enthusiast. To these passages, we may add the following account of the procession of the nuns, in the convent at Quebec. The clause which we have marked in italics is a little finical.

‘An old priest, exceedingly lazy in his manner, and monotonous in his tone, was reading mass, to which most of the audience zealously vociferated a response.

‘An arch, ornamented with basso relievo figures of the saints, on one side of the chancel, surmounted a door, which apparently led to an interior chapel; and beneath a similar one, on the op-

posite side, was a grated window, shaded by a large, flowing curtain of black silk.

‘Behind this provoking screen were the daughters of earth, whom our traveller supposed to be as beautiful as angels and as pure.

‘For some time a faint response, a slight cough, or a deep drawn sigh, alone indicated the vicinity of the seraphic beings.

‘At length, however, the mass, with all its thousand ceremonies, was concluded. There was silence for a moment, and then was heard one of the low, thrilling chants of the church of Rome.

‘There was the noise of light, sandalled feet. The music died away to a delicious warbling, *as faint and earnest as woman’s entreaty*; then gradually rising to a bold, majestic burst of sound, the door on the opposite side opened, and the sisterhood entered amid a glare of light.

‘That most of them were old and ugly passed unnoticed; for whatever visions an enthusiastical imagination might have conjured up, were certainly realized by the figure that preceded the procession.

‘Her forehead was pale and lofty, her expression proud, but highly intellectual. A white veil, carelessly pinned about her brow, fell over her shoulders in graceful drapery; and as she glided along, the loose white robe, that constituted the uniform of her order, displayed to the utmost advantage that undulating outline of beauty, for which the statues of Psyche are so remarkable.

‘A silver crucifix was clasped in her hands, and her eyes were steadily raised toward heaven; yet there was something in her general aspect from which one would have concluded, that the fair devotee had never known the world, rather than that she had left it in weariness or disgust.

‘Her eye happened to glance on our young friend, as she passed near him; and he fancied it rested a moment with delighted attention.

‘The procession moved slowly on in pairs, the apostles bearing waxen lights on either side, until the last white robe was concealed behind an arch at the other end of the extensive apartment.

‘The receding sounds of “O sanctissima, O purissima,” floated on the air, mingled with clouds of frankincense; and the young man pressed his hand to his forehead with a bewildered sensation, as if the airy phantoms of the magic lanthorn had just been flitting before him.’ pp. 116, 117.

The following is a picture of a more amusing nature. How

far it is a correct likeness is a point which we must leave to the decision of our elders.

‘On the ensuing sabbath, Somerville joined the young ladies on their way to Hollis street. The crowd presented a strange contrast to the congregations of the present day. Here and there a taper waisted damsel, glittering in embroidered brocade, with flowers even larger than life; while close by her side walked the dandy of that period, with bright red waistcoat, leather small-clothes, and enormous buckles sparkling in the sun. Then followed a humble dame, with rustle gown and checked apron, leading a reluctant urchin, stumbling along with his little three cornered scraper; the tears still trickling down his cheeks, forced from him by the painful operation of being shoved and shaken into his tight breeches for the first time. In the rear came an older boy, alternately casting an envious eye on the trim little fellow before him, and a despairing glance at his own clothes, which, drenched by repeated rains, hung in slovenly folds about his ancles.’ p. 78.

The finest passages of this volume, however, as well as of *Hobomok*, are those of a pathetic kind. We refer as proofs of the author’s talents in this department of composition, to the interview between Grace and Lucretia, in which the latter first discovers the fatal secret of Somerville’s duplicity. The description of the deathbed of Grace is distinguished by beauties of the same kind.

‘Grace, agitated by these events, and her slight form daily becoming more shadowy, seemed like a celestial spirit, which having performed its mission on earth, melts into a misty wreath, then disappears forever.

‘Hers had always been the kind of beauty that is eloquence, though it speaks not. The love she inspired, was like that we feel for some fair infant which we would fain clasp to our hearts in its guileless beauty; and when it repays our fondness with a cherub smile, its angelic influence rouses all there is of heaven within the soul. Deep compassion was now added to these emotions; and wherever she moved, the eye of pity greeted her, as it would some wounded bird, nestling to the heart in its timid loveliness.

‘Every one who knew her, felt the influence of her exceeding purity and deep pathos of character; but very few had penetrated into its recesses, and discovered its hidden treasures. Melody was there, but it was too plaintive, too delicate in its combination, to be produced by an unskilful hand. The coarsest minds felt its

witching effect, though they could not define its origin ;—like the servant, mentioned by Addison, who drew the bow across every string of her master's violin, and then complained that she could not, for her life, find where the tune was secreted.

‘Souls of this fine mould keep the fountain of love sealed deep within its caverns ; and to one only is access ever granted. Miss Osborne’s affection had been tranquil on the surface, but it was as deep as it was pure. It was a pool which had granted its healing influence to one, but could never repeat the miracle, though an angel should trouble its waters.

‘Assuredly, he that could mix death in the cup of love, which he offered to one so young, so fair, and so true, was guilty as the priest who administered poison in the holy eucharist.

‘Lucretia, now an inmate of the family, read to her, supported her across the chamber, and watched her brief, gentle slumbers, with an intense interest, painfully tinged with self reproach. She was the cause of this premature decay,—innocent indeed, but still the cause. Under such circumstances, the conscience is morbid in its sensibility, unreasonable in its acuteness ; and the smiles and forgiveness of those we have injured, tear and scorch it like burning pincers.

‘Yet there was one, who suffered even more than Lucretia, though he was never conscious of giving one moment’s pain to the object of his earliest affection. During the winter, every leisure moment which Doctor Willard’s numerous avocations allowed him, was spent in Miss Osborne’s sick chamber ; and every tone, every look of his, went to her heart with a thrilling expression, that seemed to say, “Would I could die for thee. Oh, would to God I could die for thee.”

‘Thus pillowed on the arm of friendship, and watched over by the eye of love, Grace languidly awaited the returning spring ; and when May did arrive, wasted as she was, she seemed to enjoy its pure breath and sunny smile. Alas, that the month which dances around the flowery earth, with such mirthful step and beaming glance, should call so many victims of consumption to their last home.

‘Towards the close of this delightful season, the invalid, bolstered in her chair, and surrounded by her affectionate family, was seated at the window, watching the declining sun. There was deep silence for a long while ; as if her friends feared that a breath might scare the flitting soul from its earthly habitation. Henry and Lucretia sat on either side, pressing her hands in mournful tenderness ; Doctor Willard leaned over her chair, and looked up to the unclouded sky, as if he reproached it for mocking him with brightness ; and her father watched the hectic flush upon her

cheek, with the firmness of Abraham, when he offered his only son upon the altar. Oh, how would the heart of that aged sufferer have rejoiced within him, could he too have exchanged the victim!

‘She had asked Lucretia to place Somerville’s rose on the window beside her. One solitary blossom was on it; and she reached forth her weak hand to pluck it; but its leaves scattered beneath her trembling touch. She looked up to Lucretia, with an expression which her friend could never forget, and one cold tear slowly glided down her pallid cheek. Gently as a mother kisses her sleeping babe, Doctor Willard brushed it away; and turning hastily, to conceal his quivering lip, he clasped Henry’s hand with convulsive energy, as he whispered, “Oh, God of mercies, how willingly would I have wiped all tears from her eyes.”

‘There is something peculiarly impressive in manly grief. The eye of woman overflows as readily as her heart; but when waters gush from the rock, we feel that they are extorted by no gentle blow.

‘The invalid looked at him with affectionate regret, as if she thought it a crime not to love such endearing kindness; and every one present made a powerful effort to suppress painful, suffocating emotion.

‘Lucretia had a bunch of purple violets fastened in her girdle, and with a forced smile she placed them in the hands of her dying friend.

‘She looked at them a moment with a sort of abstracted attention, and an expression strangely unearthly, as she said, “I have thought that wild flowers might be the alphabet of angels, whereby they write on hills and fields mysterious truths, which it is not given our fallen nature to understand. What think you, dear father?”

‘“I think, my beloved child, that the truths we do comprehend, are enough to support us through all our trials.”

‘The confidence of the Christian was strong within him, when he spoke; but he looked on his dying daughter, the only image of a wife dearly beloved, and nature prevailed. He covered his eyes and shook his white hairs mournfully, as he added, “God in his mercy grant that we may find them sufficient in this dreadful struggle.”

‘All was again still, still, in that chamber of death. The birds sung as sweetly as if there was no such thing as discord in the habitations of man; and the blue sky was as bright as if earth were a stranger to ruin, and the human soul knew not of desolation. Twilight advanced, unmindful that weeping eyes watched her majestic and varied beauty. The silvery clouds that composed

her train, were fast sinking into a gorgeous column of gold and purple. It seemed as if celestial spirits were hovering round their mighty pavilion of light, and pressing the verge of the horizon with their glittering sandals.

‘Amid the rich, variegated heaps of vapor, was one spot of clear, bright cerulean. The deeply colored and heavy masses which surrounded it, gave it the effect of distance, so that it seemed like a portion of the inner heaven. Grace fixed her earnest gaze upon it, as the weary traveller does upon an Oasis in the desert. That awful lustre which the soul beams forth at its parting, was in her eye, as she said, “I could almost fancy there are happy faces looking down to welcome me.”’

‘“It is very beautiful,” said Lucretia, in a subdued tone. “It is such a sky as you used to love to look upon, dear Grace.”’

‘“It is such a one as *we* loved,” she answered. “There was a time when it would have made me very happy; but—my thoughts are now beyond it.”’

‘Her voice grew faint, and there was a quick gasp, as if the rush of memory was too powerful for her weak frame.

‘Doctor Willard hastily prepared a cordial, and offered it to her lips. Those lips were white and motionless; her long, fair eyelashes drooped, but trembled not. He placed his hand on her side; the heart that had loved so well, and endured so much, had throbbed its last.’

We close this article in the hope of soon hearing again from the same quarter. We shall be happy if our remarks should induce the author to select, for her future attempts, such subjects as will give full scope to the talents, which she indisputably possesses, and to bestow a little more care on the construction of her story, and especially on the unraveling of her plot. But at any rate, we trust, that she will not be discouraged from pursuing her literary labors, as we believe, that when the first feelings of disappointment shall have passed away, the present work, notwithstanding its many defects, will hold a high rank in the estimation of all admirers of descriptive and pathetic eloquence.
